

11-10-47

THE VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY OF AN INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT POLICY IN RETAIL STORES.

There are three principal reasons why a policy of integrated employment in retail stores is of benefit to the community:

a. Because it rights a basic wrong. It is part of the American tradition that people must be judged as individuals, not as members of groups, that they shall have an opportunity to advance as individuals, not as members of groups. To classify jobs on the basis of race is contrary to that American tradition. To employ people according to merit without reference to race is in keeping with the American tradition.

b. Because in the end it is economically more sound and fair. The concept of free enterprise is based on the idea that there shall be free competition among individuals. To employ people and to do business with people in terms of group identifications violates this concept of free enterprise. It inevitably works to the disadvantage of some group, usually to the minority group, and to a very large extent it hurts everybody. Conformance to racial identification of jobs implies that regardless of merit, regardless of how competent or how hard he work, a person can never rise above the classifications assigned to his particular racial group. It tends to impoverish a group which in turn becomes to some degree a burden upon the rest of society, less productive and in turn provides a less lucrative market for goods which are produced.

c. Because racial classification of jobs creates and perpetuates misunderstanding and ill feeling between people of different racial groups and in turn hampers community efforts to bring about interracial understanding and cooperation.

This statement is devoted to the third consideration.

Goodwill, understanding and cooperation between individuals and between groups is dependant upon a feeling of a common cause and a common interest. Whenever groups of people have a feeling that their particular interests are separate from and to some extent in competition with other groups of people there will be a line of cleavage between them and over-emphasis upon unity within the separate groups and antagonism between them. If differences in appearance or language or religion or a cultural background are emphasized by assigning to the groups separate locations in which to live, separate departments in which they work or separate job classifications the sense of difference is increased. The groups are made to stand farther apart than is necessary. In our country people of many nationalities, many religions and many races have been brought together around the idea that regardless of such differences all men have a common interest in a democratic idea.